

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 005973

SIPDIS

NOFORN

DEPT FOR NEA, DS/IP, DS/ICI/ATA, DS/ICI/PII, SY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/16/2013

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [SY](#) [IS](#) [CASC](#)[SY](#)

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING (EAC) NOVEMBER 16, 2005

REF: DAMASCUS 5886

Classified By: CDA Steve Seche for reason 1.5(C)

1. (S/NF) The EAC convened on November 16, 2005 at 1430 hours to discuss the security situation in Syria after receiving several intelligence reports indicating specific/general threat information.

2. (S/NF) The EAC discussed three different pieces of intelligence:

First, a report that the Syrian Public Relations Association's ongoing protest about a hundred meters from the Embassy (see Damascus 5886) may be a staging area for a group to conduct sabotage activities against the Mission or the kidnapping of a US diplomat.

Second, a non-specific assertion in the same report that the US Embassy will be a target for some sort of terrorist operation in the next few days.

Last, a report describing the consideration being given by a Sweden-based terrorist group with affiliates in Syria to the kidnapping of a US diplomat in Syria.

3. (S/NF) The EAC discussed the ongoing protest in Rawda Circle, about 100 meters from the Embassy. The Charge noted that he had met last week with the head of the Syrian Public Relations Association (SPRA) to urge re-location of the protest, and received assurances that the demonstrations were specifically not/anti-American in nature, and were intended to provide a venue where Syrians can engage in a national dialogue. The Charge told the SPRA director that he would continue efforts to have the "national dialogue" re-located to another venue. He has tried unsuccessfully to meet this week with the Deputy Foreign Minister to discuss this issue; efforts to schedule that appointment continue. In addition to the assurances given by the demonstration's organizers, it was noted that the protests to date have been small, sporadic and non-violent. The Syrian authorities have increased the police presence around the embassy and have thus far effectively controlled the crowds that have gathered each night.

4. (S/NF) The EAC then discussed intelligence reporting regarding preliminary stages of a plan to kidnap a US diplomat. The EAC instructed supervisors to convey to American staff the need for increased vigilance, including continuing to vary their times and routes, and maintenance of a low profile. Further, the EAC recommended that US personnel should to the extent possible avoid areas where Americans/Westerners congregate in large groups and should be aware of their immediate surroundings. The Embassy will issue a warden's notice advising the larger American community to exercise similar caution in their own daily routines.

5. (S/NF) The RSO's office will meet with the Commanding General of the Emergency Police to discuss enhancing the security around the Embassy, beyond additional measures that have been taken since the protests at Rawda Circle began. Further, the RSO will pass the tear-line information to the Syrian police.

SECHE